A number of critical issues relating to protection of employment in beedi industry have been referred to this office from time to time. These relate to exemption granted in excise duty to unbranded beedis, concession granted in excise duty to mini cigarettes, comprehensive legislation (Anti-tobacco legislation) proposed by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, to discourage use of tobacco in any form, 100% F.D.I. to MNCs in cigarette making, ban on sale of tobacco products on railway platforms, Excise duty exemption to cigarette making units in the growth and other such infrastructure centres in Assam and Tripura etc.

All these issues have been examined in Government and appropriate authorities have been advised to take in to account these concern while initiating further action on them.

Minimum Wage of Tea Plantation Workers in West Bengal

3000. SHRI DAWA LAMA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 826 given in the Rajya Sabha on 2nd March, 2000 and state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there are permanent workers engaged in tea plantation in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the reasons for not incorporating the minimum wages of tea plantation workers of West Bengal; and

(c) what is the rate of minimum wage of tea plantation workers in West Bengal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) There are various categories of workmen engaged in Tea Garden in West Bengal. There are daily rated workers and monthly rated workers of different grades like technical, clerical, medical and supervisory. Most of them are permanent while there are some temporary/ daily rate workers.

(b) In West Bengal though employment in Tea Industry has been added to the Schedule to the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, wages of all categories of workers engaged in Tea Industry are determined through Industry-wise negotiations and settlements.

(c) Minimum wage of a daily rated Tea Plantation Workers as on date is Rs. 34.80. Besides the wage in cash, the workmen in Tea Industry in West

Bengal get some other fringe benefits like free accommodation, medical facilities, fire-wood, ration at concessional rates etc.

Review of Plantation Labour Act, 1951

3001. SHRI DAWA LAMA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government will review Plantation Labour Act, 1951 in consultation with Trade Unions;

(b) if so, the time frame thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons, therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) The Plantations Labour Act, 1951 is administered by the State Governments. Various amendments in the Plantations Labour Act, 1951 are proposed based on the requirements of the social partners. A cautious policy is adopted to bring about any amendment in the Act after taking into consideration all the relevant factors. Amendment proposals will also be discussed in the tripartite committee of the Plantation Sector, which also includes representatives of workers' organisations.

Wages for women in unorganised Sector

†3002. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that women, working in unorganised sectors are generally gets less wages in comparison to men in the whole country;

(b) if so, whether Government are contemplating any effective steps in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 provides for payment of equal remuneration to women for the same work or work of similar nature. The Central Government is the appropriate Government in relation to any Employment carried on by or under the authority of the Central Government or railway administration, or in relation to a banking

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.